

# NEWSLETTER

SABAH WETLANDS CONSERVATION SOCIETY



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*FROM*

*SABAH WETLANDS CONSERVATION SOCIETY*

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## WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2018

United Nations has marked June 5 as World Environment Day (WED) since 1974 to promote “worldwide awareness and action for the protection of our environment.”. The World Environment Day is the global annual event celebrated in KK Wetlands. The theme for 2018 is 'Beat Plastic Pollution' to encourage people to reduce the usage of plastic in their everyday lives to combat one of the great environmental challenges of our time. The United Nation (UN) has selected this year theme to urge all people to reject single-use plastic items and warned that growing levels of plastic waste were becoming unmanageable. – U.N Secretary.

## SABAH WETLANDS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

A Non-Government Organization working on Conservation of Wetlands in Sabah

Established on 22 August 2005

To promote the conservation of wetlands in Sabah and the variety of plants, birds and other kinds of organisms found in them.

To raise public awareness and appreciation of wetlands and public involvement in protecting wetlands.

To manage Kota Kinabalu Wetlands (KKW) as a model wetlands centre for the purpose of conservation, education, recreation, tourism and research.

## OBJECTIVES

## SWCS WED 2018

For this year, Sabah Wetlands Conservation Society (SWCS) celebrated WED 2018 on 30th June 2018 at Kota Kinabalu Wetlands Ramsar Site (KKWRS). The programmes and activities were focused on environmental education especially about the plastic pollution. The targeted participants were students from primary schools around Kota Kinabalu area. The objectives of this programme are to raise awareness among the participants about the cause and impact of plastic pollution and to encourage the participants to combat plastic pollution.



*Young Gardener Station*

92 students from three invited school SK Tanjung Aru 1 (26 students), SK Sri Gaya (31 students), SK Likas (35 students) participated in this programme. The activities were divided into five stations called Craft from Plastic Station, Mangrove Walk Station, Young Gardener Station, Paper Making Station and Chill Out Station.



*Paper Making Station*

Craft from Plastic Station encouraged students how to make a craft using used plastic bottles, plastic bag and any types of plastic. Mangrove Walk Station give students an experience walking in the real mangrove forest. The facilitators explained the threat that KKWRS had faced especially with plastic pollution. While in the Young Gardener Station student learnt about how to make a compost from dry leaves, grass and soil. the students learnt how to make paper using recycle paper in Paper Making Station. The last station is Chill Out station that explained about the food web in the ecosystem and the climate change.





## #BEATPLASTICPOLLUTION

The existence of plastic made it convenient for users as there are tonnes of applications can be achieved by using plastics but this invention was not all about its benefits. Plastic is used in daily life as food or water container, the presence of Bisphenol A [BPA] affects people of all ages. It is a problem when it comes to plastic products as it disrupts the endocrine or hormonal system in the human body which interferes with the production, secretion, transport, action, function and elimination of natural hormones.



credit: teenatheart.com

The main concern is that the numbers of plastic waste are not going to decrease as the world population is always increasing hence increase the usage of plastics. The world population when plastic was first made was approximately 3 billion and now the human population is approximately twice the number. The effectiveness of manufacturing technologies nowadays produces more plastic than it was before hence contributing to more accumulation of plastic waste in the landfills or rivers. We will be leaving a plastic world for our future generations if there is no limitation to the usage and manufacture of plastic.

### Article references:

<https://www.sciencehistory.org/the-history-and-future-of-plastics>, <https://plastic-pollution.org/>

The detrimental effects of plastic can be seen on our shores, sewer, river banks, and mangrove forest. Debris from high tide are left on the land and this provides a breeding place for mosquitoes which might be carrying diseases like malaria and dengue. Snakes and scavengers are attracted and brought closer to our homes and pose threat to us.



Credit: Nationalgeographic.com.au

Plastic pollution not only affects the human community but also affect the animal especially marine living organisms. Turtle for example always attracted to the plastic bag and desired to eat it. Plastic wastes give an ugly sight for tourists and this affect tourism in a country which is bad for the economy. Even for ourselves, plastic waste will give a bad impression of the community living in the area as it mirrors our attitude. Plastic Pollution is a very huge problem, so it depends on us how to reduce and control the plastic usage.



credit: g.cz

## PLASTIC & MANGROVE FOREST

Mangrove conservation in the right circumstances can help to reduce vulnerability to climate-related coastal hazards. It has been used to reduce the risk of the disaster such as floods and act as an adaption measure. With the structural diversity of mangrove roots and their position, the mangroves provide a contribution to water quality and nutrient transfer. The roots act as a filter to trap sediment of run-off and river water, reducing the water turbidity, giving these adjacent ecosystems a good place for survival.



However, there is a comparative lack of awareness of the status and health of these vegetated coastal habitats. The mangroves provide a clean environment for everyone, but the pollution caused by humans is worsening. It is more likely to see the marine debris including the non-biodegradable plastics thus resulting in harm to both the ecosystems and the species living here.

The increase of marine debris alters and degrade marine habitats through abrasion, shearing or smothering resulting in a change of physical and chemical composition of sediments and increase in salt concentration in the water. Salinity stress can lead to mangrove mortality and less productive mangrove ecosystem where the salinity surpasses the adaptable level of mangrove trees in the area.

*Article references:*

<https://lovegeography.wordpress.com/harm-to-mangroves/>, <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/coastal-crisis-mangroves-risk>  
<http://web.unep.org/coastal-eba/content/mangrove-conservation-and-restoration>

## KKWRS THREAT AND SOLUTION

Kota Kinabalu Wetland Ramsar Site threatens with excessive rubbish especially plastics that were coming every day from the coastal area. During the high tide, the water from the coastal area brings the rubbish coming into the mangrove area. The big roots of mangrove trees will trap the rubbish and during the low tide the water did not bring out the rubbish together.

KKWRS had initiatives to reduce the plastic by installing rubbish trap to prevent the rubbish coming into the mangrove area during the high tide. Besides that, KKWRS also invited the volunteer to help cleaning the mangrove in the programme called Environmental Voluntary Work.



*Plastic Pollution at KKWRS*



*Rubbish trap*



*Mangrove Cleaning activities*

## "Get to know" Ramsar Site Malaysia

### Ramsar Sites in Sabah

Lower Kinabatangan - Segama Wetlands Ramsar Site (LKSW) is the first Ramsar Site in Sabah. It was recognised on 28th October 2008 during the conference of parties in Changwon Korea and become the largest Ramsar site in Malaysia that spanning over 78,803 hectares. The Ramsar site area covers three forest reserves Trusan Kinabatangan FR, Kuala Segama & Kuala Meruap FR and Kulamba FR. The two large rivers, the Kinabatangan river and the Segama river flow through the site and form important spawning and nursery ground for fish and prawn species.



*Kinabatangan River*

Credit: <http://cedepudente.blogspot.com>

There are many different types of flora and fauna that can be found in this area. The endemic species that listed in IUCN red-list such as Orang Utan (Critically Endangered), Proboscis Monkey (Endangered) and Rhinoceros Hornbill (Near Threatened). The endemic species to Borneo, the Bornean Elephant called Pygmy Elephant also can be found in this area.

About eight villages located inside and around LKSW Ramsar Site. This wetland is very important to the villager for their livelihood because most of them are a fisherman. The rapid development of the tourism industry brought greater benefits for local communities as they can generate incomes by employment and running a homestay.

However, LKSW is facing some serious threats and risks. One of the major problems would be forest fires. This type of threat would deeply wound the Kulamba Forest Reserve and the Peat Swamp forest. Other than that, there is also illegal hunting and trawling that threatens some key species such as Tembadau, Orang Utan and Sun bear. While, trawling activities will pose direct harm to aquatic wildlife such as Irrawaddy dolphins, freshwater sawfish, freshwater sharks and more other. Last but not least, the threat that should also be taken into concern although a polemic problem, is river pollution due to intensive livestock and unhealthy farming activities.



*Orang Utan*

Credit: <http://cedepudente.blogspot.com>



*Pygmy Elephant*

Credit: <http://cedepudente.blogspot.com>

Article references: [http://www.forest.sabah.gov.my/images/1\\_Overview\\_of\\_LKSW\\_RAMSAR\\_Sabah](http://www.forest.sabah.gov.my/images/1_Overview_of_LKSW_RAMSAR_Sabah).

## SWCS Raya Celebration

SWCS annual Raya Celebration was held on 30th June 2018 at KKWRS, with approximately 30 Management Committee and Ex-Officio, staffs, interns, Volunteer Guardians and invited guests attending. The celebration started with the video presentation of "Raya Music Video" made by staffs and interns. After that, the celebration continued with the performance by interns and followed by a speech from SWCS President Datuk Haji Zainie Abdul Aucasa. The celebration continued with other fun activities like "Boling Kelapa", "Menganyam Ketupat" and karaoke session. The SWCS management would like to thank members and invited guests attended the event and hoping can maintain the established, friendly business relationship and continued mutual cooperation for a long period.





5th April 2018. Environmental Education Programme with students from Hong Kong

## NEWSPAPER CLIPPING CORNER

dailyexpress

YOUR LOCAL VOICE | FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 2018

Warisan-led State Govt told

# Stop mangroves loss for good

Mary Chin

KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah Wetlands Conservation Society (SWCS) is seeking an assurance from the new Warisan-led State Government that there will be no further conversion of mangrove forest in Sabah to other land use, whether for agriculture or aquaculture and to provide support in ensuring that these areas are managed on a sustainable basis.

SWCS President Datuk Zainie Abdul Aucasa said Pakatan Harapan has in its Election Manifesto pledged to balance economic development with the protection of the environment.

"And at State-level Parti Warisan Sabah has also pledged to protect, conserve and optimise the natural environments. In addition, the Sabah State Policy on the Environment (2017) clearly states that the current forest coverage will be maintained or increased, and it is hopeful that no further conversion of mangrove forests be conducted," he said.

While the State Government had made



Zainie

a commitment that there would not be any conversion of mangrove forest into other land use, a concerned Zainie stressed on the need to reaffirm if this policy still stands.

"Will the policy of 'no conversion' be applicable in forest reserves and forested state land?" he asked.

According to him, the benefits of mangroves have been well documented, and should these areas be converted to other land use, the move will have impacts for spawning habitats of certain marine biodiversity.

"Moreover, it will have further implications for local communities who are dependent on economic activities in these mangrove forests."

Zainie was commenting on Deputy Chief Minister cum Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Christina Liew's statement that she will bring to the attention of the State Government the grievances of Gabungan Enam Kampung affected by the ongoing Shrimp Aquaculture Project at Sungai Telaga, Pitas.

"I will convey the people's requests that the remaining area of 1,000 acres be left untouched by the company concerned, and for no expansion to the shrimp farm, to the State Government for consideration. The destruction of 2,300 acres of man-

grove swamps since 2013 is of grave concern," she was quoted as saying.

From his observation, activities involving land clearing for agriculture and aquaculture had given rise to environmental issues.

Quoting statistics, Zainie said over the years, the total area of mangrove vegetation in Sabah had recorded a decline, from 366,000ha (1973) to 346,000ha in 2003 and then to 341,000ha in 2014.

"Most of these mangroves are mainly found in forest reserves (Class I, V & VI). In 2015 alone, about 1,305ha of mangrove forest (Class V) were excised for reasons best known to the authorities concerned," he pointed out.

The development of shrimp farms and encroachment into mangrove areas is public knowledge, he noted, resulting in active rehabilitation subsequently conducted by the Sabah Forestry Department (SFD) with assistance from non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Meanwhile, Zainie assured that SWCS will continue to play a small part in assisting mangrove rehabilitation efforts and building local communities' capacity in managing mangroves.

The Society's collaboration with the Government includes a Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) with the Sabah Forestry Department to rehabilitate Sulaman Lake Forest Reserve, Tuaran; the planting of more than 25,000 mangrove trees in the degraded mangrove area; an MOU with Acacia Forest Industries Sdn Bhd, with the objective to explore research and conservation efforts by both parties and to provide capacity-building opportunities for the local community and school students; and conducting a brief survey on mangrove flora and fauna in the Marudu Bay Forest Reserve in Kota Marudu.

"We have also assisted in building capacity of a local youth group called Kelab Belia Anak Taritipan (ANBATAR) Youth Group in Kota Marudu which aims to focus on mangroves conservation and mangroves-based tourism.

"In addition, SWCS is actively involved in assisting the State Government, other NGOs and local community groups to create a new area of wetland known as Sungai Darau Wetland (in Menggatal) targeted as a tourist destination in the near future," Zainie said.

One of the greatest achievements was when SWCS together with the State Government successfully obtained the 2nd Ramsar Site status for the Kota Kinabalu Wetlands in 2017, he added.



## Guests' comments



We really enjoyed it! Seen birds and lizards!  
All nature around here so green and beautiful.

- Melanie & friend, UK



Interesting! Especially on World Wetland Day!  
It is important to protect our environment. Good Job!

- Gabrielle & friends, UK



This is a very important conservation area.  
Mangroves are very important for human well-being and protecting the earth. Keep up with a great job!

- Thomas & son, Canada

## Upcoming Events

### Environmental Education Programme

- Trinity School England
- Jabatan Pengairan Sabah

### Environmental Voluntary Work

- SMK Bongawan 2



## VOLUNTEER NEEDED!

01

### Volunteering is good for your heart

Volunteering for KK Wetlands Ramsar Site can be great fun! If you have passion for the environment or just want to gain more outdoor experiences, this is the appropriate channel. Do not miss the chance! Sign up to be a volunteer now or contact us for more information.

02

### Monthly Bird Monitoring



Join our monthly birding activity on every 15th-17th day of the month



FOR  
MORE  
INFO

How to  
**REGISTER**

Call us at  
088-246955  
or drop us an email at  
swcs@sabahwetlands.org

## membership

03

### Benefits of being our member

- As a member, you will be able to participate in members' events and enjoy free entry to Kota Kinabalu Wetlands Ramsar Site
- Eligible for 50% discount for binoculars rental\*.
- Most importantly, you know you are helping this ecosystem to survive and provide essential services to it.

04

**DONATE  
TECHNOLOGY**

Give your old laptop or desktop a new life by donating us!

support us by joining our programmes

## 1. Environmental Education Programme

- KK Wetlands Mangrove Experience Programme
- Mangrove Conservation Experience Programme
- Handcrafting from Mangrove

## 2. Environmental Voluntary Work

- Nursery Work
- Mangrove Clean-Up

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